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Va. Woman Pleads Guilty to 2 Counts

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A former employee of the CIA in Ghana pleaded guilty yesterday to two violations of a law prohibiting disclosure of the identities of people working for the CIA, but pleaded not guilty to 16 other related charges, including espionage.

Sharon M. Scranage, 29, appeared before U.S. District Court Judge Richard L. Williams in Alexandria, who set Oct. 7 as the date for her jury trial on the other charges.

"Our position is that Sharon committed the acts to which she acknowledges her guilt," her attorney, Brian Gettings, said afterwards.

"But she's not guilty of espionage; she's not guilty of conspiracy and there were extremely mitigating circumstances surrounding that which she pleaded guilty to."

Scranage's former Ghanaian boyfriend, Michael Agbotui Soussoudis, also appeared before Williams yesterday and pleaded not guilty to charges of espionage and receiving classified information from Scranage when they were dating in Ghana in 1983 and 1985.

Soussoudis, 39, who is a first cousin of Ghana's leader, Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings, was charged last week in a separate eight-count indictment and is being held without bond. Williams set Oct. 15 as trial date for Soussoudis, whom government prosecutors allege is a Ghanaian intelligence agent.

Scranage, accompanied by her parents and other family members, appeared composed, answering Williams' questions in a loud, clear voice. She declined comment after the hearing. Arrested July 10, she was released to her parents' custody a week later after they put up the family home in King George, Va., to secure a \$25,000 bond.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Justin Williams said Scranage's guilty pleas, which relate to the less serious charges in her indictment, were not part of a plea arrangement and that "the government intends to

go forward with each and every other count"

Gettings said he had been unsuccessful in his attempts to negotiate a plea arrangement with the U.S. attorney's office in Alexandria.

The two counts to which Scranage pleaded guilty charge her with revealing to Soussoudis the identities of two covert CIA agents, referred to in court papers as John Doe 1 and John Doe 2, "well knowing that . . . the United States was taking affirmative measures to conceal such covert agents' intelligence relationship" to the United States.

Prosecutor Williams said the government would have "presented evidence from CIA employees, includ-

ing a former chief of station, which would corroborate the existence of the two covert agents, John Doe No. 1 and John Doe No. 2, as CIA informants."

Williams said that Scranage, "after a confrontation and argument at her house with Soussoudis," told him the identity of John Doe 1 and confirmed "that John Doe No. 1 had previously been meeting at her residence with the CIA's chief of station."

According to the government's case, Soussoudis asked Scranage "about her recruitment and prior positions with the CIA. He told her that there was no need for her to worry, and that nothing was going to happen to her."

Judge Williams deferred setting a sentencing date for Scranage. The maximum penalty for the charges is 10 years and a \$50,000 fine.

in CIA Case